



Planning Ahead

Apparently January is the traditional time of year for “planning” as we are all meant to have a bit more time available over the Christmas period to think about things. Whilst this might not be true for all of the livestock industry, the shorter days do tend to concentrate the mind to get as much done outside as possible before we descend into the gloom of another drizzly or cold night. In some cases this may give us some time (if not the energy) to plan for the year, or indeed years, ahead.

Having revised a few farm health plans at the end of last year I am hopefully responsible for a couple of farmers having a bit of a think about things, as two of my favourite questions are WHAT and WHY. To clarify I am not echoing my 4 year old daughter but mean:

- What are you doing and why?
- Why are you doing things that way?
- What are your short and long term aims?

My Dad was a farm manager and when I announced that I wanted to be either a vet or a farmer he advised me to try to be a vet so that I could see lots of other farms! Partly as a result of my Dad’s

innate farmer nosiness I am now a vet and one of the best things about the job is going to many different farms, seeing how everyone else does things and in some way, however big or small, being involved in the management of all of those farms (and no he did not advise me to marry a farmer that was my own idea!).

My job is to make a difference, not just by curing a cow or sorting out some lame sheep, but by providing long term animal health and welfare advice, and improving efficiency and productivity, which will ultimately help profits and hopefully improve farmer welfare. We all push ourselves constantly to get everything done and sometimes miss what is going on under our noses until another pair of eyes sees what is happening. As such I would encourage you all to try to make some time to think ahead this January and also to make the most of the vets that come to your farm – we are more than willing to look at more than the animal in front of us and also to divulge top tips from other farms that we go to on our rounds. The more we all talk and exchange ideas the better for the whole industry and maybe just a

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little tweak here or there could make all the difference for a more prosperous and less stressful 2018.

If rehydration fluids are given by mouth, continuing milk feeding is strongly advised to provide the gut with energy to repair itself. Small milk feeds and rehydration fluid feeds should be alternated throughout the day.

Diagnosing the cause

If an infectious cause of scour is suspected then it is important to ascertain the cause of the scour. Dung samples from a few scouring calves should be submitted for testing.

In severe cases of scours, early veterinary treatment is life-saving. Have a chat with your vet about calf scours.



Clare Eames

Change of Leptospira Vaccine

After due consideration by our Clinical Policy Group we have decided to change our recommended leptospira vaccine to Spirovac.

This vaccine will continue to give your herds a full twelve month immune protection against leptospira and also reduces the risk of cows becoming carriers.

- ◆ It is proven to reduce the level of excretion and shedding in infected cows urine which is relevant to both cattle and human infection transmission.

- ◆ It is licenced to be given from 4 weeks of age compared to 5 months for our previous vaccine.

- ◆ It has been proven that animals previously vaccinated with Leptovoid-H can be satisfactorily boosted with **Spirovac**. All further primary programmes need to be two doses of **Spirovac** 4-6 weeks apart, with full immunity being achieved three weeks after the primary course.



Please note any animals which have already received Leptavoid-H as the first dose in their primary vaccination programme i.e. heifers or newly purchased animals should continue to receive Leptavoid-H as their second dose at this point.

If there are any points of clarification or discussion regarding this please do not hesitate to contact the practice and speak to dispensary or a veterinary surgeon.



Andrew Davies

Downer Cows

Downer cows can be one of the most time consuming conditions that both beef and dairy farmers have to manage. Even after the primary cause for her being down has been treated you can still end up having to nurse a cow for several days before she makes a full recovery, and of that you can never be certain. One of the most important things to be equipped with when dealing with downer cows is a plan. Whether that involves seeking veterinary care in 24 hours or euthanasia in 5 days it's crucial that there is a plan in place, both to prevent unnecessary suffering but also to save your precious time – something that is often undervalued. Nursing a cow with a broken leg for 3 weeks can be a disaster for multiple reasons.



Figure 1 Severe, irreversible damage caused after laying on a hard surface for <6 hours

An area that is gaining more interest are secondary problems (conditions that develop while the cow is down) and their importance with regards to outcome. One study found that cows that were anaesthetised and allowed to lay on a hard floor for 6 hours developed irreversible damage that resulted in the animals having to be euthanized. The inset image shows how in such a short space of time swelling, nerve damage and necrosis with large areas of muscle dying, were allowed to develop around areas that were under pressure.

MANAGEMENT OF THE DOWNER COW

Treatment – for both the primary conditions and secondary conditions which usually means anti-inflammatories

Fresh food and water – in a bucket that doesn't fall over!

Location

- Sheltered
- Restricted – to prevent movement away from the food and water you've kindly supplied, and other cows coming and poaching it for themselves, as well as unnecessary scrabbling
- Soft, deep bedding which is comfortable and doesn't allow an animal to slip – often deep straw bed or pasture if conditions right

Circulation – involving either rolling the cow from one side to another as often as possible or effective lifting

Udder care – if possible then milking out should be performed twice a day to reduce the risk of mastitis, this is especially true if the cow is leaking milk and the teat orifice is open

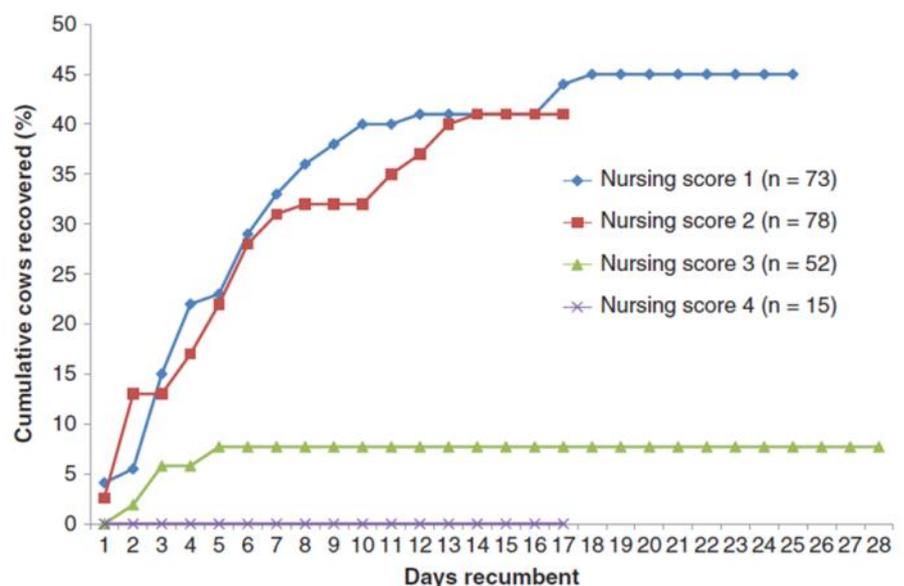
discussion as there is certainly a correct method of lifting a cow as well as incorrect method. If in doubt I would strongly advise to watch a video you can access from the [link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REadbA1xz0I), (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REadbA1xz0I>), it clearly shows the do's and don'ts of lifting cows and explains why at times you may be doing more harm than good.



Figure 2 *Effective lifting can be a useful aid when dealing with downer cows, especially when trying to milk*

The standard of management in general will be a huge factor in whether or not your patient has a successful outcome. A recent project looked at the standard of care a downer cow received as well as the eventual outcome, care being rated from 1 to 4 with 1 being the best and 4 being the worst.

Such studies have highlighted the need for suitable bedding as well as the need for maintaining circulation to the trapped leg, whether that be by rolling the cow from side to side as often as possible or lifting. Lifting a cow can sometimes be an interesting



Downer Cows ...

The results were striking and display a clear relationship, none of the cows receiving the poorest standard of care ever recovered while those receiving grade 1 and 2 showed much more positive results with some still recovering several days into nursing. Regardless of the primary condition, management had a major impact. Another important thing to note is that even with the optimum standard of care some cows did not recover however long they were managed for, finding out the suitable candidates for nursing early on is crucial.

TOO MANY DOWNER COWS? WHAT'S THE CAUSE

Dystocia

- Inappropriate bulls
- Heifers not at correct body weight when served
- Cows over conditioned at calving
- The calving process itself—personnel and equipment

Falling Trauma

- Is there a particular place where it occurs?
- Grooving and rubber matting
- Obstruction free

Milk Fever

- Dry period ration unsuitable?
- Over conditioned
- Underlying low magnesium

Toxic Mastitis

- Dry cow therapy need assessing?
- Unhygienic calving environment



Ben Barber

As with all diseases, prevention is better than cure. If you feel that downer cows are becoming too much of a common occurrence on farm then figuring out the primary cause may be helpful. If there are any questions then please do not hesitate to ask your vet.



Meet the Team

Gemma Bowditch started with us back in July 2014 as our TB administrator. Over the three and a half years her roll has changed from this to become PA to our directors, Health & Safety and RVC Co-Ordinator and achieving a distinction in her diploma in 2017. She does still enjoy helping out in the TB department whilst covering holidays!

When she isn't in the admin office you can find her trying to keep up with her black Labrador Hugo, or in the kitchen whipping up a few cakes!



Synchronisation for Artificial Insemination (AI)

The use of AI in beef cows and groups of dairy heifers may not be considered by some farmers due to the problems of heat detection and not having appropriate handling systems for AI. This may mean that they are missing the opportunity to improve and speed up the genetic merit of the herd.

Benefits

Using AI gives you a number of benefits such as access to the bull Estimated Breeding Value (EBV) data. This data allows you to make different choices for traits for producing good quality replacement heifers and better quality calves for beef production and also take into account traits like calving ease and gestation length etc..

For herds that don't have their own bull and rely on hiring a bull this can eliminate the disease risks for bringing a new animal into the herd and any risks associated with natural service.

Synchronisation increases the percentage of cows/heifers calving in the first three weeks of a calving period by having a group of animals all being bred on the first day of a mating period.

Here at Synergy we have put together an all-inclusive package to give a set price to include synchronisation by one of our vets and AI by one of our Vet Tech's.

The package includes:

- Vet visit and professional time to examine animals, insert hormone device and give first injection
- Cost of the fertility medicines used including those administered by the farmer using a precise timetable left on farm by the vet.
- Inseminations (1 or 2) carried out by our Vet Techs (Lower DIY AI cost applies if other AI arrangements have been made)

What does it cost?

Per cow	>20 cows	<20 cows
Vet Tech Double AI	£40.50	£45.00
Vet Tech Single AI	£33.00	£36.50
DIY AI	£27.00	£30.00

Semen costs would be additional to the costs quoted above.

Using a member of our Vet Tech team has advantages such as you will not be restricted to only using certain companies for the supply of semen and we can also be flexible with the time of day that we serve the cattle which can make use of double AI more effective

One of the key decisions to be made is whether to use a single insemination or to inseminate twice at different times to cover a greater period of time to improve the pregnancy rate.

Aim

Research would suggest that there would be an improvement in the pregnancy rate of 5-10% when double insemination is used. The cost benefit must be weighed up depending on semen costs, handling facilities etc.

Using synchronisation for fixed time AI with good management, it is possible to get 1st service AI pregnancy rates of 65% or higher but this requires good nutritional management, control of diseases that can affect fertility, and attention to detail.



Dave Phillips

If you are interested in this package or you would like more information or advice on synchronisation don't hesitate to contact your routine vet or the office

News from our Rounds

East

Andre Northey



December 2017 soon came round and presented with some unusual and challenging cases.

The month started with castrating a group of 15 beef bulls aged around one year. Although it's obviously doable, my general advice is, for the safety of everybody involved, humans and animals, not to wait that long before emasculating male bovines. The stress for the bulls and the health risks for animals and operators is significant and avoidable by castrating at a much younger age.

I saw several dairy cows with life threatening mastitis having been dried off with teat sealant only. It just shows how important it is to make absolutely sure that only healthy and CMT negative udder quarters are sealed in the cleanest possible way.

I came across a very rare condition of "nervous coccidiosis" in a group of goats. This parasitic disease leads to sudden neurological symptoms like seizures accompanied by constipation rather than diarrhoea as usually associated with coccidia. Depending on the severity and the presence of other disease the prognosis is poor. As always the monitoring of parasitic infestation and the treatment according to the findings are key for prevention.

It was a great pleasure to help a commercial beef producer to introduce some outstanding French Limousin genetics into their herd by transferring a significant number of frozen embryos into Limousin and Hereford recipients. The advanced breeding technology of embryo transfer is a well established tool to fast-track the achievement of set breeding goals. If you are interested in the collection and/or transfer of bovine or camelid embryos please contact me.

South

Ed Powell-Jackson



The emerging and highly topical issue of antibiotic resistance came to the fore over the Christmas period for me when an outbreak of scour in very young calves (<5 days old) was diagnosed to be caused by multi drug resistant E coli infection. A large number of calves were very sick on this large dairy farm. Sensitivity to 10 different antibiotics was performed, with only one proving to be effective against the E coli infection! This is a very worrying situation, not only for the farmer and his animals, but for us as vets too. This is the precise scenario that our colleagues in human medicine encounter on an almost daily basis, and precisely why there is so much discussion about the sensible and correct usage of antibiotic medicines in both animals and people. It is almost certain that this nightmare scenario arose through the excessive, and on occasion inappropriate, use of antibiotic medicines. Clearly this must not become more widespread, and it is for this reason that all Red Tractor assured farms now require annual medicines reviews and attendance on safe use of medicines courses as part of their annual audit.

Thank you once again to all of my clients for their cards, presents and good wishes on the arrival of my son Toby back in September. It was a pleasure to introduce him to some of you at various social events over the Christmas period. He is certainly thriving and already vocal and nosy – where did he get that from?!?

Happy New Year and best wishes for a productive and healthy 2018!

North

Josh Swain



With Christmas done and dusted it's back to work for me after a bit of time off. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, pneumonia is the word of the week/month/season. I think all of us on the North have seen lots of coughing calves and had numerous phone calls discussing treatment options. With each case of pneumonia costing you £43 (that's without taking long term production losses into account) and the dairy and beef sectors committed to a 20% and 10% reduction in antibiotics by 2020, reducing pneumonia needs to be a priority for the industry, with housing, nutrition and vaccination all areas to focus on.

So if your calves have pneumonia, here are two things that are worth knowing about:

1. Zoetis is offering heavily subsidised testing for 5 calves and covers 5 of the most common respiratory bugs. It's a useful tool for helping to decide which vaccines may work best on your farm and can be carried out on calves from 4 months (but works best if calves slightly are older).

2. **0-6 Young stock service.** For the cost of £42 month you get: personal young stock vet to discuss issues with, 3 interesting and varied workshops a year (to which you can bring along as many members of staff as you wish), 2 vet tech data collection visits, 2 vet visits with reports and action plans

Finally thanks to all of you that answered the repeated calls, emails and reminders for the suckler herd survey being run by Ben at the end of the month. I'm sure the North will be well represented and I'm looking forward to joining in with the discussion and catching up with you all.

Beef Meetings

30th Jan 7pm Eagle Tavern
1st Feb 7pm Royal Oak, Bere Regis

**Spring Calvers Meeting:
Downer Cows
First Aid Course
9th February 2018**

EVENTS

**Mobility Scoring
14th February 2018**

Milk Sure Training Day— 7th February 2018

Milksure is a dairy industry initiative to reduce the risk of getting bulk tank residue failures by training farmers about the potential risks when using medicines. Part one is a group meeting at Evershot followed up by individual farm visits. Arla and other milk buyers are encouraging their farms to attend a course and in some cases will subsidise the joining fee. Please ring the office and speak with Peter Siviter and Rachel Hayton if you wish to know more.

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